



Sam Brownback

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SUDAN PEACE ACT INTRODUCED TODAY

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback spoke today at a news conference on Sudan calling for a new Sudan policy. Brownback led a Congressional delegation to Sudan in June, and he is an original cosponsor of the Sudan Peace Act which is being introduced today.

"Some of the world's greatest suffering today occurs in the Sudan, because of the brutality practiced by that government against its own people," Brownback said. "In response, I join my colleagues, Senators Frist, Lieberman, and Feingold, on this legislation, the Sudan Peace Act, to challenge these human rights abuses and provide practical solutions to end the suffering.

"The civilian population of Sudan suffers greatly under the crushing, dictatorial hand of the National Islamic Front (NIF) government. It is subjected to extraordinary indignities by that government including the enslavement of women and children, and the bombing of civilian hospitals, schools and religious centers. Even now, the people are recovering from a government manufactured famine of last year where 100,000 people died because food was used as a weapon to induce mass starvation.

"The statistics include 1.9 million dead in the last decade, and 4.3 million refugees, the largest refugee population in the world. There is genocide, there is slavery, there is religious persecution of the Christians, the traditional African believers, and the moderate Muslims of the South. There is forced female genital mutilation of the females captured and sold into slavery.

"These are blatant crimes against humanity which no one ought to suffer, and this extraordinary suffering has continued far too long. In response, we need a new policy on Sudan to address these sufferings. This legislation seeks to provide a number of solutions: It calls for wider food distribution outside of the present UN-structure, to thus curtail another famine due to deliberate government food-withholding practices. It calls for an enhanced peace process to end this decades-old civil war which has ravaged its people. It calls for direct food assistance, among other humanitarian help, to the opposition forces which are standing for freedom and democracy. It calls for human rights monitors to promote an end to the civilian bombing. It calls for the creation of a registry of names for the women and children sold into slavery. It legislatively implements the present sanctions regime established by the president through executive order. It mandates a shift from disaster assistance to the more constructive development assistance so the people can move beyond mere subsistence to rebuild their ancient society. It mandates a special report on the Nuba Mountains whose population has been ravaged, and reduced from 1 million to 400,000 in a mere 10 years, as reported by the U.S. Committee for Refugees.

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"I am convinced of the urgency of this situation. This year, the war will either escalate because

of the much-anticipated oil revenues which the government will receive to purchase new weapons. Or, international pressure will be brought to bear to end this brutal war which has continued far too long.

“The policy presented in this legislation is in America's interest. It promotes containment of the terrorist threat represented by the NIF government, the same government which hosted Osama bin Laden who bombed American Embassies last year. It promotes regional stability by supporting democracy development. Finally, it is fundamentally right and humane, restoring dignity to a people presently ravaged by slavery, religious persecution, famine, war, and civilian bombing. I hope this legislation represents the beginning of a new Sudan policy and the ending of the war and suffering which has continued far too long,” Brownback said.

Last month, the Senate passed legislation authored by Brownback, giving humanitarian aid to the southern Sudanese, as a part of S. 1234, the Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill. Earlier this month, the Senate passed a resolution sponsored by Sen. Brownback, condemning the NIF government for its support of terrorism and its continued human rights violations.

Brownback is a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and sits on the African Affairs Subcommittee. He is also a commissioner on the Helsinki Commission (the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe).